

## THE LITTLE ONE AWAY.

World ain't like it to be—older folks in May.  
Summer ain't so sweet to me. The little one's away!  
Wish the birds a-singing could reach the ones that roam:  
Wish the sweet bells ringing could ring my darling home!

Bit here in the sunshine, solemn-like, and see  
Morning glories peeping in where once she used to be;  
They loved her little window, with the blossoms and the lights;  
Gave her glad good mornings, kissed her sweet good nights.

Sit here in the darkness when no winds the maples stir,  
And hear the singing a-sing a sad, sweet song of her;  
I know the lilies dream of her, with her in the roses room,  
And flowers shine like stars of gold and leave to light her home.

World ain't what it used to be—skies are cold and gray;  
Summer ain't as sweet to me. The little one's away!  
Wish the sweet bells ringing could reach the ones that roam:  
Wish the sweet bells ringing could ring my darling home!

—P. L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.

## THE VICAR'S ... MAY MEETING.

BY BRUCE McKEEVER.

BUT, when I assure you, sir, upon my honor, that I had never spoken to Mr. Alphonse before, and that it was quite by chance I went to the supper, through the invitation of an old college class, won't you reconsider the matter?"

Thomas Dane shook his head decidedly. "No, Mr. Sinclair, I must act according to my conscience, and that forbids me to consent to my daughter's engagement to a man who frequents such society as that of—this dancer, who—I—understand is a most—er—notorious character."

"But it was a mere chance, I don't frequent such society," urged Charlie Sinclair, who thought it very hard that, because a tale of his having been carried to the vicar, his engagement to Miss Rose Dane should be broken off. The vicar had never regarded him with much favor, and seemed to grasp eagerly at this pretext for dismissing him.

"Perhaps you don't remember, Mr. Sinclair," he said, severely, "that we are bidden to avoid all appearance of evil. Had you borne this in mind it might have been well."

"Oh! I see, it's only the appearance of evil you mind, not the thing itself," said Charlie, with a smile. "I can see the influence you might exercise over her mind, and I would not—er—be for good. Kindly consider our interview at a close. My time is valuable, as I have to prepare for a visit to London," and Mr. Dane rang the bell with decision.

With head erect, and a mind boiling with rage at the injustice meted out to him, Charlie stalked out of the room, only restraining himself by a great effort from the undignified measure of slamming the door. But he had hardly closed it when there was a rustle of skirts, and from another doorway emerged a slender, auburn-haired creature, with tender blue eyes and a skin of cream and roses, who flung her arms around his neck with a softly anemic cry. "Oh, it is bad news, Charlie? You look so angry."

"The very worst, dearest. He won't allow me to justify myself. Says our engagement is at an end, and has forbidden me even to say good-by to you," said her lover, holding her closely.

"As if I would let you go like that! I told Sarah I would, answer the door, and Aunt Agatha is sleeping upstairs. Oh, Charlie, what shall I do without you?"

"Don't cry. Make a bolt of it, and come away with me. We shall be married before he can stop us."

"No, no, I couldn't do that. And there's my money. We should lose that if I married against my father's wishes. No, we must wait. Only—only, Charlie, you—you don't really care much about that woman, Miss Alphonse?" said Rose, her fingers very busy with a certain button of his coat, her eyes downcast, her voice rather abashed.

"Why, you dear, foolish child, of course I don't. She is old enough to be my mother, and I don't care anything about her except her language," said Charlie, with a very reassuring laugh.

"Oh, hush! Go! Father's snatching out," cried Rose, in alarm. And smothering a brief kiss, he allowed himself to be hustled out of the front door just as Rev. Thomas emerged from his study to tell Rose to pack his portmanteau over night, and to have breakfast early the next morning, as he was going up to the vicar by the first train from Slough.

There was no part of the year Mr. Dane enjoyed more than his annual run to London for the May meetings. He had a wonderfully good taste in cookery for a country person, and never put up at the cheap hostels patronized by most of his brethren, where bacon and eggs for breakfast, and soup, joint and a tart for dinner constituted the staple fare, and this year he had been recommended to the Hotel Berti as having an excellent cuisine. His expenses were paid by an old friend of his, a cousin, who he never failed to worry himself about a shilling here or there, and when he sat down to dinner, and had partaken of some bistro soup and a sole à la Souise, he began to feel that, after all, there are consolations in this vale of tears.

The hotel was very full. Already enthusiastic colonials were beginning to arrive for the jubilee, and he was distinguished generally by the ultra newness of their clothes and the curious quality of their voices. Specimens were sitting nearby opposite Mr. Dane, and was talking in a high key to another man.

"Take my word for it, Australia is the coming country," he overheard, "if you get five per cent. for your money, you think you're a winner. And, get 10 or 15 as a just return to Sydney, and you'll open your eyes for you. Oh, it takes a smart fellow of the country to cheat an Australian. I may talk about you, but I should just like you to see a cup run over. And the women!—well, haven't seen a woman in London that patch on her Sydney girls."

"I wonder he ever came to a well-lighted place as England, do you?" said a quiet, gentlemanly man sitting next to Mr. Dane, catching a glimpse of his eye and smiling.

"He appears a singularly boastful young man," said Mr. Dane, rather glad to have some one to whom to speak. "You always notice the want of a university education."

"Ah, quite so," said the other. "Money!" the Australian was now saying. "Folks here don't know how to spend it. I've come over for the jubilee, and I don't expect to have much change left out of £5,000 when I go back. But there's plenty more where that came from."

"Rather injudicious to be so communicative to a stranger, is it not?" commented Mr. Dane to his neighbor. "Oh, he is an unlicked cub, with all his experience before him. Now, I have been a globe-trotter for years, and England seems the most delightful place on earth to me, though nearly all my old friends are dead or married, and I put up at a hotel for want of a home," said the other with rather a melancholy smile.

"Indeed, you must have many interesting experiences to relate," said Mr. Dane, attacking a salami of oysters with great gusto. "I have always desired to travel, and I was very interested in a discourse on the state of the Fiji Islanders delivered this afternoon at Exeter hall by Rev. James Ferguson."

"Yes, they are a very interesting race," observed the stranger, and somehow, Mr. Dane found himself imparting a valuable fund of second-hand information to a most interested listener. He went to bed that night very well satisfied with himself, and feeling as he never had before, that a man needed to leave home to be appreciated.

Really, Mr. Peyton, as he found his new acquaintance was called, was a decided acquisition. He always sat by him at dinner, and once or twice Mr. Dane had gone up to his private room afterward, where the cigars produced were of the best quality, as was the liqueur brandy. Mr. Peyton was a particularly well-bred, refined man, and it was only by chance mention Rev. Thomas found out how well connected was his new friend, so he was rather surprised one afternoon to come upon him talking to the young Australian, who was telling a choice story of how he had kicked a man twice the size and weight and a professional bruiser into the gutter.

"You see, he isn't a bad-hearted lad," said Mr. Peyton, afterward, "and he doesn't seem to have a friend in England, so on that account I have rather a fellow feeling for him."

"It is very good of you to be bothered with him, I am sure," said Mr. Dane, who did not much relish the Australian's addressing him as "Bishop."

Curiously enough, that very evening another friend of Mr. Peyton's turned up quite unexpectedly at dinner. An open-faced, weather-beaten man, with a bluff, genial manner, whom he introduced as Mr. Dane, Col. Stanton, "one of the oldest Virginia families," he explained, "one of the old sort, chivalrous, aristocratic, impulsive; hates the very name of New York. I hope you'll join us upstairs to-night. You'll find him very entertaining."

"I shall gladly do so," said Rev. Thomas, flattered by the invitation. It really was very pleasant upstairs in the cozy little sitting-room. To celebrate his meeting with his old friend Col. Stanton rang the bell, and ordered four bottles of St. Champanne, and a good cigar. Mr. Dane found himself growing wonderfully entertaining. He recalled several college stories, at which both Peyton and the colonel laughed heartily, so that he could afford to overlook the disparaging remarks of the Australian, who had also come up.

"I say, Peyton, what do you say to a game of cards?" said Col. Stanton, after awhile. "You and I have had many a duel, eh?"

"But our friend here, Mr. Dane, might object," said Peyton, turning to him.

"His cloth won't allow me to play, but I can sit and look on," said Rev. Thomas, with a genial smile.

"Oh, well then, what shall it be, whist with a dummy?" suggested Peyton.

"Whist be jiggered," said the Australian. "Let's have a game of poker."

"But, dear me, I don't believe I have any cards. I wonder whether I could send out for some?" exclaimed the host.

"Oh, I have a couple of packs in my Gladstone," said Col. Stanton. "I'll go and get them."

"He soon returned with two packs, and Peyton, winning the lot, began to deal.

"I remember when I was at college I knew some very amusing card tricks," said Mr. Dane, with a sudden flash of memory. "I wonder whether I could do them now? Some of them were very ingenious. Let me see—there was one—now now did it go?"

He picked up the pack of cards, and was handling them uncertainly. "Ah, I remember. Please choose a card, Mr. Peyton. Now you are quite certain you will know it again? Place it in the pack, so. Now I will shuffle them. You observe I have not seen the face of the card. Now, deal them in the deal, shuffle, shuffle again. This is your card, Mr. Peyton. I believe, the four of spades?"

"Quite right, Mr. Dane. What a wonderfully neat trick. I must get you to explain it to me by and by."

"It wasn't the four of spades, it was the deuce of hearts," put in the Australian, rudely.

"I think you are mistaken," said Mr. Peyton, suavely.

"Oh, I know several more tricks," said Rev. Thomas, full of pride at his success. "Now this is very clever. You see these three cards. Now, the queen is in the middle. I hold them loosely in my fingers—so."

The door opened, and, looking up with a start, they saw the manager in the room.

"Well, sir, what do you want here?" said Col. Stanton, brusquely.

"I have come to ask you, the man calling himself Peyton, and Rev. Thomas Dane, to leave the hotel at once," said the manager, coldly.

"What do you mean by insulting gentlemen?" blustered the colonel; but the other raised his hand.

"Come, come, there's no use in that. We all know you. You've done time in Sing Sing, and have a dozen other names. Mr. Aubrey Peyton, alias Montague Ward, alias Clement Mortimer, alias Slippery Jack, is the cleverest card-sharpener in Europe or America. Rev. Thomas Dane we believe to have been known as Yankee Bill the Barker. The whole gang of you have come over to London to operate on jubilee jugglers, but we don't want any of you here, so get out with as little fuss as possible."

"Do you mean to say they are all card-sharpers?" cried the Australian, who had sat thunderstruck.

"All. And you may be very thankful their little game was brought to a close so soon."

Mr. Dane had sat with wide mouth and staring eyes, but here he sprang excitedly to his feet.

"Sir, you grossly insult me. I am a clergyman, the Church of England. I have been as much imposed upon by these scoundrels as anyone. I refuse to leave this hotel."

## Cures Talk

"Cures talk" in favor of Hood's Sarsaparilla, as for no other medicine. Its great cures recorded in truthful, convincing language of grateful men and women, constitute its most effective advertising. Many of these cures are marvelous. They have won the confidence of the people; have given Hood's Sarsaparilla the largest sales in the world, and have made necessary for its manufacture the greatest laboratory on earth. Hood's Sarsaparilla is known by the cures it has made—cures of scrofula, salt rheum and eczema, cures of rheumatism, neuralgia and weak nerves, cures of dyspepsia, liver troubles, catarrh—cures which prove

## Hood's Sarsaparilla

Is the best—in fact the One True Blood Purifier.

Cure True Blood, easy to take, easy to operate.

"Oh, I've seen your sort of person before," said the manager, with a grim "You don't suppose I've run a hotel all these years for nothing. Come on, go quietly, and you won't be hurt."

"Here, you!" shouted Mr. Dane, turning excitedly to Peyton, who had pushed his chair back from the table, and sat listening with a cool smile, "do me at least the justice to say we never met until four days ago."

A queer gleam came into Peyton's languid eyes. "Come, come, Bill, it's no use bluffing any more. You're bound to lay down your hand. The boss holds the joker. Better go and pack your togs quickly, like the colonel and me. There's no sense in having the 'tocs in with that little matter of writing Waldorf Astor's name by mistake still unsettled, and so you'd see if you hadn't thought too much Pommery Greno inside your skin."

Perhaps he had hit on the true source of Mr. Dane's valor, but he was that it may be. The reserved gentleman stoutly refused to leave. And, finally, the manager, losing his patience, sent for a stalwart Swiss waiter to eject him, treating his threats of the law as an idle thing.

Now it chanced that that very night, Charlie Sinclair had come up to the Hotel Berti to school dinner, and hearing a scuffle, waited to see what it was about, but he could hardly believe his eyes when he saw Rev. Thomas being forced down the main staircase by a strong and phlegmatic waiter, his face crimson, his hair on end, his white teeth bared, his hand raised under one ear, shouting most awful threats of vengeance.

"It's a gang of card-sharpers we are turning out," explained the manager. "Why, Mr. Dane! What are you doing here?" exclaimed Sinclair, thunderstruck.

At the sound of a familiar voice, the vicar gave a cry of relief. "Oh, Charlie, my boy, is that you? For Heaven's sake, come and tell these ruffians who I am."

"Do you know him, Mr. Sinclair," said the manager, to whom Charlie was a well-known figure. "We found him playing cards with two well-known card-sharpers and a rich Australian they were going to pigeon."

"There is some mistake about it. This gentleman is Rev. Thomas Dane, vicar of Slough Poggio, and I am quite ready to vouch for his respectability," said Charlie.

"Oh, of course, that alters the case," said the manager, rather crestfallen. "But appearances were so utterly against the gentleman."

So it was to Charlie's good office the vicar owed his escape from such a position of shame, and all the young man said by way of comment was: "You know we are bidden to avoid all appearances of evil, sir," but a compact was entered into between him by virtue of which Charlie held silence as to the events of that night, and Rev. Thomas withdrew his veto on Rose's engagement.—Peterson's Magazine.

## SOME CAUSES OF LONGEVITY.

More Old People Found in Agricultural Places Than in Cities.

A German statistician who has made longevity statistics the special subject of careful researches recently published the result of his investigations in an interesting article. On account of the difficulty of obtaining full data in the conditions surrounding each case of longevity on record, the deductions as to the causes favorable or unfavorable to longevity are necessarily hypothetical. The figures obtained by the statistician seem to indicate, however, that climate and the degree of civilization are among the most important factors influencing longevity. More people of over 100 years are found in the middle of southern Europe than in the north, and in the high latitudes, with their long and severe winters. In countries with a highly developed civilization comparatively fewer cases of longevity are found than in more primitive countries. The statistics also show that in agricultural countries the percentage of people over 100 years old is greater than in countries principally devoted to industries. Some of the figures collected are, indeed, surprising.

According to the last census the German empire has a population of about 50,000,000. Among them there are only 73 who have passed the hundredth year. France, with a population of barely 40,000,000, can boast of 213 persons who have celebrated their centennial in good health. The figures in regard to Great Britain are very interesting and significant. Of persons who have passed the century mark there are in England 146, in Ireland 578, and in Scotland only 46. Another peculiar fact is the unequal distribution of longevity in the Scandinavian peninsula. Sweden has only ten centenarians, while rugged Norway, with a population of only about 10,000,000, can boast of 23 people who have lived over five score of years. There is a single one in Switzerland, with its snow-clad mountains.

Figures from Russia, Austria and Italy could not be obtained. For Russia no census has ever been taken, and data as to the age of individuals are unreliable in that country, unless they are based upon official records. Such cases would, of course, not enable a statistician to use them as a foundation for any comparison. In Austria and Italy local censuses have been made, but they were mostly confined to cities and certain industrial districts, so complete figures could be obtained.

The most astonishing figures are furnished by the south of Europe, Spain, with a population of about 18,000,000, has 401 people over 100 years of age. Even more favorable to longevity the climate of the Balkans seems to be. Servia, with a total population of about 2,500,000, has no less than 575 people who have passed the century mark; Roumania, with a population of 5,800,000, 1,084, and Bulgaria, with a population of 3,300,000, even 3,833. In one year (1892) there were 350 persons of more than 100 years included in the mortality reports of Bulgaria. In the minute kingdom of Servia there were, according to the census of 1892, 290 persons between 100 and 115 years of age, 153 between 115 and 125 years, 18 between 125 and 135 and three between 135 and 140.

The question, who is the oldest person in the world? has often been asked, and every now and then some claim to that respect is set up in favor of some individual of uncertain age. A few years ago a report went through the continental press of Europe saying that in Russia a man had been found who had reached the ripe old age of 160 years. However, no proofs were given for that assertion. According to the researches of the German statistician, the oldest person in the world, whose age has been proved beyond a doubt, is Bruno Cotrin, a negro, who was born in Africa 150 years ago and now lives in Rio de Janeiro. Next comes a coachman in Moscow, with 140 years to his authentically established record. The oldest woman in the world is 130 years old, but does not want to have her name mentioned, because she thinks that there are many older women in this world, who might feel offended if the palm were awarded to her.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

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